Forward-thinking council drive positive change with support from Bytes

Company profile

Industry: Public Sector   Users: 10,000+

Norfolk County Council

Overview

Norfolk County Council (CC) is the local authority for Norfolk, England, a rural region rich in history and natural beauty with towns including Norwich and Great Yarmouth. Norfolk CC have ambitious plans for growth, recognising the importance of sustainability and delivering digital services to their citizens. The council aim to be carbon neutral by 2030 and have achieved wide recognition for their digital strategy, winning Digital Council of the Year at the Connected Britain Awards 2020.

Challenge

Norfolk CC's digital strategy was created to benefit the public, helping to spur business growth and ensure everyone has access to modern technology, as well as enhancing operations within the council to drive efficient service delivery.

The strategy has three components:

- Digital Citizen – equipping citizens with digital skills, services and ultrafast broadband
- Digital Employee – ensuring council staff have the technology required to be productive
- Better Use of Data – making informed decisions about service delivery using data

To execute each component, Norfolk CC wanted to use Microsoft technologies. This required technical support to ensure effective adoption, as well as commercial advice to get the best value

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> Bytes helped us to understand the Microsoft technologies – how to deploy them effectively, how to get the architecture right, and how to configure them to get the best value. Much of this was through workshops and I appreciated Bytes' proactive approach throughout. We were very proud to win Digital Council of the Year 2020 at the Connected Britain Awards, and I'd like to say thank you to Bytes for helping us to exploit Microsoft solutions as much as we possibly can.

Geoff Connell | Director of IMT & Chief Digital Officer | Norfolk County Council

from their investment. The council chose to work with Bytes, as they have a dedicated team who understand the unique needs of the public sector, and provide services to help organisations adopt, rollout and get the most from Microsoft technology.

Solution

Bytes kicked-off the project by helping Norfolk CC to assess their current and future objectives. This gave the council clarity, enabling them to pinpoint which Microsoft solutions were needed to bring their digital strategy to life. From this, Bytes gained a clear understanding of their business and user requirements and created a commercial model to suit them.

Bytes' Cloud Solutions team then helped Norfolk CC to implement their chosen Microsoft solutions, which included Microsoft 365 (M365), Dynamics 365, Power BI and Power Apps. Bytes ran technical Discovery & Enablement and Identity & Security workshops, which helped the council to deploy, architect and configure each solution to suit their needs, as well as discover the range of security features available in M365 to protect data in the cloud.

Norfolk CC adopted M365 to fulfill the Digital Employee component of their strategy. This cloud-based productivity suite includes Teams, which the council used to increase collaboration amongst their remote workforce and with other public entities in the region, such as the NHS. To drive further efficiency and digital democratization, the council adopted Power Apps, which enables all staff to develop applications and improve processes.

To deliver the Better Use of Data component, Norfolk CC adopted Power BI, which enables users to gain insights from their data using visualizations and simple reports. The council use it to compile data from their health and social care departments and make decisions regarding service delivery. It was also used to gather data about infection rates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Norfolk CC also adopted Dynamics 365 – an intelligent CRM solution that delivers sales, marketing, operations and commerce capabilities under one platform. This contributes towards the Digital Citizen strand of the council's strategy, providing citizens with a digital identity and enabling them to access council services and support online.

Benefits

With help from Bytes, Norfolk CC used modern technology to transform. They now fully support remote working using M365, and this is bolstered by agile technologies such as Power BI and Power Apps, which enable staff to provide more targeted services to the public. These solutions were all highly useful during the pandemic, when the council needed to adapt to a fast-changing situation.

Norfolk CC plan to further explore the security features of M365, especially Microsoft Defender, which provides protection from ransomware and zero-day malware. The council also want to invest further in Microsoft Azure, in order to increase their data analysis and scalable development capabilities. This increased use of the cloud will also help Norfolk CC to meet their goal of carbon neutrality by 2030.